



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE
LESTER SPELL, JR., D.V.M.
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE – August 25, 2005

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Vietnamese Basa Samples Taken in Mississippi Test Positive

Commissioner of Agriculture Lester Spell is seizing adulterated Vietnamese basa in Mississippi retail food markets. "The positive tests confirmed what was suspected," said Spell. "The Department is doing everything within the law to keep these adulterated products away from consumers in Mississippi. This effort is to insure that consumers have access only to safe foods."

Six of eight samples taken from in-state stores have confirmed the presence of prohibited antibiotics in the imported fish for sale in Mississippi. Tests are continuing on the other two, as well as other samples that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce inspectors have collected in recent days. Inspectors of the Consumer Protection Division will continue to collect samples from suspect product around the state. As Vietnamese basa are located, samples will be collected and submitted to the Mississippi State Chemical Laboratory to test for the presence of fluoroquinolones, a class of antibiotics prohibited in fish under U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines.

Following laboratory confirmation of suspect adulterated Vietnamese fish, Commissioner Spell has ordered the seizure of all known adulterated product in retail grocery stores where samples were pulled that were shown to be positive. This action is in addition to his "stop-sale" orders previously issued last week on product from two Vietnamese processors identified in a recent U. S. Food and Drug Administration import alert.

MDAC received verification from two retail chains that operate in Mississippi that they have notified their stores to remove all Vietnamese basa products from their shelves. Confirmation of such directives, as well as inspection of other stores, is ongoing by the Department. To date, the ban seems to be working given that inspectors are no longer finding the product available in most stores.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce's Consumer Protection Division has inspection authority in retail food establishments such as grocery stores and smaller markets. Restaurants and wholesale distributors are regulated by the Mississippi Department of Health.